

MEMO**ROHM & HAAS COMPANY**cc: Dr. D. S. Frederic
Mr. D. S. Marston

Date January 5, 1965

To Dr. D. J. Butterbaugh (3)

From Robert P. Goodale

DATE STAMP

135203

Subject: Handling of News Contacts on Whitmoyer Water Contamination

1. In order to minimize Rohm & Haas association with the problem, all inquiries received in Philadelphia should be referred to Mr. Trout at Whitmoyer as spokesman for the subsidiary company and one who is fully familiar with the operations concerned. If callers insist upon a comment from a Rohm & Haas spokesman, such inquiries should be referred to Mr. Goodale or to Mr. Marston. It will be their responsibility to obtain the necessary information to answer such inquiries and to clear this with Dr. Butterbaugh before release. Mr. Trout should keep Mr. Goodale informed promptly, by phone if urgent, of any press contacts and information released.
2. Following the proposed discussion with the State authorities at Harrisburg on Wednesday, January 6th, if the authorities decide that information on the situation is to be circulated in a manner that will make it available to the press, then a joint statement by the State and Whitmoyer Laboratories should be made. If the State plans to release information independently, then a release should be made at the same time by Whitmoyer. How broadly such a release should be distributed would depend upon the State's action and the initial news coverage.
3. The statement should be a recitation of the events leading to the present situation, the steps taken to correct the problem, and any general background on the contaminating compound that would help to allay concern on the part of the general public. The statement should include comments on the fact that there had been no kill of animal, fish or aquatic vegetation, that the USPHS standards accept a concentration of 0.05 ppm and that the tolerance in European waters is 0.2 ppm, etc. Because news stories, if they appear, will be in daily news and other general media, the use of technical terms should be minimized and thoroughly explained. This would apply particularly to units of measurement such as parts per million versus percentages. A unit of measurement that will give the lowest apparent values should be used.

The role of arsanilic acid in animal feed will undoubtedly be of interest and an explanation of the process of manufacture, if such information is not confidential, would be in order as a background for the waste product.

4. It is almost impossible to predict the reaction to the situation if it becomes public knowledge. It certainly will provide more fuel for the already hot fire on reducing stream pollution and will reflect badly upon the chemical industry image. At a minimum, we can expect a passing flurry of stories about the situation; the fact that steps have been taken to correct the condition may reduce the news value. At worst, a crusading newspaper could keep the story alive for a protracted period. The chemical journals will undoubtedly give coverage to the matter. How sympathetic this coverage will be is also hard to predict, but here we should have some influence.